First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Policy Framework

A Progress Report

May 2003

Alberta
LEARNING

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POLICY STATEMENT

Alberta Learning commits to proactive collaboration and consultation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit parents and communities, and other key education, government, and community stakeholders to implement learner-focused strategies that will:

- *Increase and strengthen knowledge and understanding among all Albertans of First Nations, Métis and Inuit governance, history, treaty and Aboriginal rights, lands, cultures, and languages.*

- *Provide First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners with access to culturally relevant learning opportunities and quality support services.*

- *Develop ministry capacity to address First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner needs effectively.*

- *Report progress on the achievement of expected long-term outcomes for First Nations, Métis and Inuit people, and other Albertans.*

FNMI Education Policy Framework
(February 2002; Page 9)

INTRODUCTION

The Government of Alberta is committed to enhancing the well-being and educational opportunities of Aboriginal peoples in the province. As part of Alberta Learning's commitment to the Government of Alberta's Aboriginal Policy Initiative (API), a key priority for the Ministry is to improve First Nations, Inuit and Métis learner success.

In the spring of 1999, a review of the 1987 Native Education Policy was initiated. An extensive public consultation process involving over 5,000 participants laid the foundation for the development of the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education (FNMI) Policy Framework*.

During the consultations, a Native Education Policy Review (NEPR) Advisory Committee was established consisting of First Nations and Métis authorities, other key education stakeholders and government.

In 2002, Alberta Learning released the *First Nations, Métis and Inuit (FNMI) Education Policy Framework*. Since the development of the Framework, the Ministry's initiatives have been guided by the five priority strategies/actions recommended by the NEPR Advisory Committee:

Strategy 1.5 Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner access to post-secondary and other adult education and training opportunities and support services.

Strategy 2.1 Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending provincial schools.

Strategy 2.2 Increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers and school/institution personnel.

Strategy 2.4 Facilitate the continuous development and delivery of First Nations, Métis and Inuit courses and professional development opportunities for aspiring and existing administrators, teachers/instructors and school/institution personnel.

Strategy 4.2 Build working relationships that will contribute to quality learning opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.

The purpose of this report is to communicate to Albertans the current work of Alberta Learning toward improving Aboriginal learner success. It provides an update on the progress made by the Ministry since the release of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*. The summary is not exhaustive but highlights some of the Ministerial initiatives that are being undertaken in conjunction with increased funding of $5.6 million in the fiscal year 2003/2004.[1]

On the following pages, the current Ministry actions are referenced against the goals and strategies recommended in the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*. The strategies that correspond with the five priority actions recommended by the NEPR Advisory committee are identified with an asterisk.

Improving Aboriginal learner success is a shared responsibility. Alberta Learning looks forward to continued collaboration with Aboriginal learners and parents, Aboriginal communities and various education stakeholders to implement strategies to enhance educational opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners in the province.

[1] This $5.6 million is a new amount designated for the *FNMI Education Policy Framework* in 2003/2004. It is a mixture of one-time and anticipated ongoing funding depending on future Ministry business plans and allocations. It does not include other significant Ministry funding, such as the current annual funding of $5.5 million for school jurisdiction-initiated Aboriginal programming (see page 7), among others.

GOAL 1

Highly quality learning opportunities that are responsive, flexible, accessible, and affordable to the learner

For fiscal year 2003/2004, new funding of $1,750,000 is being directed toward meeting the actions/strategies identified in Goal 1 of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*. The following describes initiatives that are underway or being launched.

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Aboriginal Language Courses • Blackfoot and Cree 10, 20, 30 courses are currently being taught in some Alberta high schools. Junior High learning resources for both Blackfoot and Plains Cree have been developed in cooperation with First Nation Education Authorities (i.e., the Kainai Board from Blood reserve and Treaty 6 Tribal Ventures). In addition, Alberta Learning and the Alexis Board of Education are developing Stoney/Nakoda language courses. (Strategy 1.13)	Strategy 1.1: Increase the quantity and quality of First Nations, Métis and Inuit curriculum, language, learning and teaching resources.
Aboriginal Studies 10, 20, 30 • The first provincial program in Aboriginal Studies has been developed in partnership with elders, educators, and ministry staff. The course content for Aboriginal Studies 10, 20, 30 deals with First Nation and Métis history and contemporary issues with an Aboriginal perspective. The courses are being implemented in some provincial schools. An authorized resource list has been completed and three textbooks for Aboriginal Studies are currently being developed. (Strategy 1.11)	
Social Studies K-12 Curriculum • Aboriginal historical, cultural, and spiritual content has been integrated into the revised Social Studies Program. (Strategies 1.11 & 1.12)	
Infusion of Aboriginal Content into the K-12 Curriculum • Alberta Learning is undertaking work to include Aboriginal perspectives into all subject areas including fine arts, physical education, literacy, and science. (Strategy 1.12)	

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Industry Training Program • Alberta Learning is collaborating with stakeholders to develop Aboriginal initiatives leading to increased employment opportunities. For example, SAIT has partnered with Maskwachees Cultural College to deliver a Petroleum Industry Training program. (Strategy 1.51)	* Strategy 1.5: Increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner access to post-secondary and other adult education and training opportunities and support services.
Apprenticeship Initiatives • Technical training classes for the Carpenter and Painter Decorator trades will be ongoing in 2003 – 2004 for registered apprentices in Siksika, and preparations to deliver a second year Carpenter class in Wabasca/Desmarais in January are underway. Delivery of other apprenticeship classes for various communities is under discussion. • Alberta Learning provides support to the Alberta Aboriginal Apprenticeship Project (AAAP), a joint venture initiative between industry and Aboriginal representatives and the federal government designed to increase Aboriginal participation in Alberta apprenticeship programs. • Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) provides opportunities for high school youth to begin their apprenticeship program in Grade 10. The youth are paid by their employer during their on-the-job training, while they earn high school credits. Once the youth have graduated from high school, they are eligible to enter the first year of their apprenticeship technical training program, and often realize full time employment with the training employer. • Fifty $1,000 scholarships are available to students who are completing RAP and who will be entering the regular apprenticeship program. These are offered to all students in the RAP. In addition, there are 165 scholarships available for apprentices annually. Of these, there are 11 scholarships specifically identified for Aboriginal apprentices. • Youth Apprenticeship Learning Opportunities Project (YAP) is currently being implemented as a pilot project and is anticipated to be in three northern communities by March 2004. The purpose of YAP is to provide youth with the opportunity to combine education with on-the-job apprenticeship-type training. • In response to the need for a skilled workforce, a number of pre-apprenticeship programs are being delivered to Aboriginal people. For example, a joint training program is being offered in Fort McMurray for the Métis Nation of Alberta and the Athabasca Tribal Council. • A number of communication activities are underway to develop informational and promotional materials for Aboriginal audiences to increase their awareness and assist them to make choices about career opportunities in the trades.	

** Priority as recommended by the NEPR Advisory Committee.*

GOAL 2

Excellence in learner achievement

For fiscal year 2003/2004, new funding of $3,393,000 is being directed toward meeting the actions/strategies identified in Goal 2 of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*. The following describes initiatives that are underway or being launched.

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Alberta Learning has added 5 Full-Time Equivalents (FTE's) to implement the FNMI Education Policy Framework • 3 FTE's have been added in the areas of: Special Programs, Professional Development and Literacy. • 1 FTE has been added in Aboriginal Studies and Social Studies • 1 FTE has been added to infuse Aboriginal Curriculum into all subject areas.	* Strategy 2.1: Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending provincial schools.
Amiskwaciy Academy • Amiskwaciy Academy is a partnership between Alberta Learning and the Edmonton Public School Board. Using the Alberta Program of Studies as a base, the Academy enriches the curriculum by offering options courses that reflect Aboriginal traditions and values. (Strategy 2.1)	
Rainbow Spirit Project • Rainbow Spirit Project is a joint venture between Edmonton Catholic Schools and Alberta Learning. It is designed to identify and implement a series of "Best Practises" into six district schools to meet the needs of integrated Aboriginal students. (Strategy 2.1)	
First Nations, Métis and Inuit Education Programs • Since the late 1980s, Alberta Learning has provided funding for school jurisdiction-initiated Aboriginal education programs. Current annual funding for these programs is $5.5 million. • In 2001-2002 there were 44 projects focused on improving student achievement, high school completion, parental involvement and cultural awareness. Funds for the projects were used to hire school/community liaison workers, develop culturally relevant curricula and resources, and support Aboriginal language and culture instruction.	

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Alberta Initiative for School Improvement (AISI) Projects • Eight AISI projects are exclusively aimed at providing direct assistance for Aboriginal students. Strategies are designed to increase school attendance, improve performance on Provincial Achievement Tests, provide cultural awareness and professional development for staff, provide student support and promote parental involvement.	* Strategy 2.1: Increase the attendance, retention and graduation rates of First Nations, Métis and Inuit students attending provincial schools.
Aboriginal Teacher Education Program • Operating in conjunction with Blue Quills College and Northern Lakes College, the University of Alberta is supporting two cohorts of future Aboriginal teachers through Alberta Learning Access Fund Grants. The first cohort began in January 2002 in cooperation with Blue Quills College. The second cohort at Slave Lake, in cooperation with Northern Lakes College, began in September 2002. A third cohort, regionally based, will begin in September 2003.	* Strategy 2.2: Increase the number of First Nations, Métis and Inuit teachers and school/institution personnel.
Professional Development Activities • In partnership and collaboration with the six Regional Consortia, Alberta Learning will develop a training manual and deliver sessions that will assist school staff, central office personnel, school councils and school boards to develop a better understanding, respect, and appreciation of Aboriginal cultures and improve the school-community learning environment for Aboriginal learners. **Aboriginal Teacher Education Instructional Modules** • In partnership with the Universities of Lethbridge, Calgary and Alberta, the Ministry will develop and deliver instructional modules for all graduates of teacher education programs, that address the needs of Aboriginal learners.	* Strategy 2.4: Facilitate the continuous development and delivery of First Nations, Métis and Inuit courses and professional development opportunities for aspiring and existing administrators, teachers/instructors and school/institution personnel.
Performance Measures • A plan to collect Aboriginal student information, and monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of apprenticeship programming for Aboriginal students, is underway. (Strategy 2.51) • The Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative (ALDCI) will be implemented in September 2003. For more information on the ALDCI see page 11. (Strategy 2.52)	Strategy 2.5: Improve mechanisms to measure First Nation, Métis and Inuit learner success.

GOAL 3

Learners are well-prepared for participation in post-secondary studies and the labour market

For fiscal year 2003/2004, new funding of $460,000 is being directed toward meeting the actions/strategies identified in Goal 3 of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*. The following describes initiatives that are underway or being launched.

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Literacy Project • A contract has been signed with the Further Education Society to develop and deliver a training program for the Aboriginal Literacy and Parenting Skills (A-LAPS) Trainers. • Discussions and planning have begun with the Centre for Family Literacy on a project to train Aboriginal Family Literacy providers and to purchase culturally appropriate family literacy learning materials.	Strategy 3.1: Increase the literacy opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and adults.
Alberta North • Alberta-North is a partnership of six northern post-secondary institutions—Athabasca University, Fairview College, Grande Prairie Regional College, Keyano College, Northern Lakes College and Portage College—that aims to increase and improve the access to educational opportunities for adult learners in northern Alberta. The network of 49 Community Access Points (CAP sites) provides educational opportunities for over 1700 registrants per year in small and isolated communities across Northern Alberta. A significant number of students are Aboriginal.	Strategy 3.2: Support arrangements to increase First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner enrolment in post-secondary programs of study.
Apprenticeship Initiatives • For examples of Apprenticeship Initiatives see page 6.	Strategy 3.2: Increase the linkages between education and employment for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.
Aboriginal Policing Certificate Program • Adult Learning along with Alberta Solicitor General and the RCMP participated in the development of two Aboriginal policing certificate programs. The first, Aboriginal Policing and Security, is a joint initiative between NorQuest College and Northern Lakes College. The second, Aboriginal Police Studies, is delivered by Grant MacEwan College. Graduates will obtain the skills and prerequisites required to enter cadet training with municipal police services and the RCMP.	
Aboriginal Entrepreneurship Program • Keyano College recently received Ministerial approval for delivery of this program that is designed to allow individuals working in Aboriginal business settings to acquire business skills and knowledge without having to leave their jobs or relocate.	

GOAL 4

Effective Working Relationships

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Building Relationships • The Ministry will build on the relationships established during the Native Education Policy Review, and seek ongoing dialogue with Aboriginal communities and education stakeholders. The Advisory Committee that helped to guide the NEPR will have a continued role through the implementation of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework.* (Strategy 4.22)	* Strategy 4.2: Build working relations that will contribute to quality learning opportunities for First Nations, Métis and Inuit learners.
Canada/Alberta/Aboriginal Partnership Forum • The Canada/Alberta/Aboriginal Partnership Forum was established in 2000 to facilitate federal-provincial discussion on Aboriginal issues and to develop more effective partnerships with the Aboriginal community, industry and other stakeholders. (Strategy 4.32) • A sub-committee on education, led by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) and Alberta Learning was established in October 2002 to identify priority areas for potential collaboration.	Strategy 4.3: Identify and reduce barriers to First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success.
Pilot Options for First Nations Education • The Government of Alberta is committed to enhancing the well-being and educational opportunities of Aboriginal peoples in the province. While remaining sensitive to the jurisdictional complexities, Alberta has indicated a willingness to work with First Nations and the federal government on teacher recruitment and retention, early childhood development, school systems, and parental involvement.	

GOAL 5

Highly Responsive and Responsible Ministry

Current Action	FNMI Education Policy Framework Strategy
Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative • *The FNMI Education Policy Framework* identified the need to create mechanisms through consultative processes to measure and improve First Nation, Métis and Inuit learner success. In order to improve the assessment of educational attainment of Aboriginal learners, Alberta Learning has undertaken an Aboriginal Learner Data Collection Initiative. (See also Strategy 2.51) A voluntary Aboriginal ancestry question will be included on registration forms in the K-12 and post-secondary systems by September 2003. This will allow Alberta Learning to collect and compile information for the measurement of system effectiveness and programs/services.	Strategy 5.1: Enhance performance measurement, performance assessment and results reporting.
Renewed Funding Framework • Alberta Learning has recently revised its funding framework to account for cost factors that vary across jurisdictions and are beyond the control of school boards. The Renewed Funding Framework distributes funding based on the following three categories: (1) base funding, (2) differential cost funding and, (3) provincial priority funding. • The Ministry has proposed that the needs of Aboriginal students will be addressed by the *differential cost funding* formulas. Jurisdictions with high Aboriginal populations will receive additional funds for each Aboriginal student identified in the school district/division.	

CONCLUSION

A commitment to maximizing First Nations, Métis and Inuit learner success

The previous sections illustrate Alberta Learning's work toward enhancing the well-being and educational opportunities of Aboriginal peoples in the province. Alberta Learning is committed to ensuring that the life-long learning aspirations and potential of First Nations, Métis or Inuit individuals and communities are realized through a responsive and accountable education system. The *FNMI Education Policy Framework* is one of the key strategies for Alberta Learning's Business Plan 2003-2006. The Ministry will be exploring new strategies for the next planning cycle to further progress toward the goals of the *FNMI Education Policy Framework*.